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.....going local.....

Archibald Prize 2015: first-time finalists bring new life to the contest

John McDonald, Sydney Morning Herald, July 17, 2015

There was such a hullabaloo about the Packing Room Prize this year one might have thought that former Frenchman Bruno Grasswill had won both the Archibald and several versions of the Nobel Prize. In fact, he had won the kiss-of-death award, traditionally given to a picture of a good bloke or a good sort, as determined by the benevolent dictatorship of head packer, Steve Peters. This year's subject was good bloke, Michael Caton, whom everybody remembers for his role in *The Castle* (1997). Personally, I think Caton's most unforgettable role was the beer commercial in which he admires a particularly lurid painting of Elvis, and says: "How can one man have so much talent?!" He probably said the same to Bruno Grasswill when he saw the Archibald entry.



2015 Archibald Prize finalist Nigel Milsom *Judo house pt 6 (the white bird)*, oil on linen.

The tastes of the packers and the trustees have never coincided, and there was no danger of history being made this year. While there have been a few Archibald Prize winners that were surprises – not always pleasant ones – it usually requires only a turn or two around the show for the prime candidate to emerge. Last year Fiona Lowry looked odds-on at first viewing and this year Nigel Milsom is the unbackable favourite. As usual, this column is being written a week in advance of the decision, so I'm obliged to take a punt.

If Milsom is not pronounced the winner, for a portrait of barrister and bon viveur, Charles Waterstreet, it may be because the judges felt that all-too-human wish not to appear predictable. The main competition is the painting to the left of the Milsom – Mitch Cairns' portrait of artist, Peter Powditch.

Both Milsom and Cairns have been runners-up in recent years, so they have form. Milsom has another kind of form as well, having recently been released from prison after getting involved in a hold-up. He managed to win the \$150,000 Doug Moran Portrait Prize while still behind

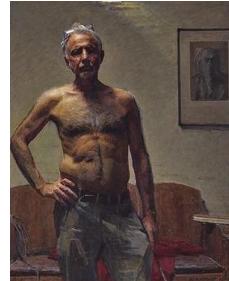
bars. If he takes out the Archibald that will be exactly the kind of story upon which the prize thrives.



2015 Archibald Prize finalist Kim Leutwyler, *Start the riot*, oil on canvas. Photo: Felicity Jenkins

Beyond the inevitable tabloid headlines it would be good news for a highly talented artist who has had his battles with drugs and depression.

As we have seen in the past, Milsom is not a flatterer, and his portrait of Waterstreet is positively Transylvanian in aspect. The lawyer stares out at us through thick-rimmed glasses, his face a withered mask. Waterstreet's jet-black robes blend in with the background, offset by the startling white of his tie, buttons and hands. Those hands are skeletal, each finger knife-like. It made me think of Steichen's famous photo of J. Pierpont Morgan, where the way the light hitting the arm of a chair makes it look as if the banker is holding a sharp blade. Waterstreet may appear to be an elderly version of Edward Scissorhands, but the painting dominates the central gallery, staring down the other entries as if daring them to try their luck. There's drama and originality in this picture, even if it's too Gothic to satisfy popular taste.



Robert Hannaford, self portrait, oil on canvas. Photo: Mim Stirling

Cairns' Peter Powditch is a completely different proposition – a stylised but remarkably good likeness of an artist whose career straddles the realms of pop art and abstraction. The gesture with the cigarette captures Powditch perfectly, while the patterned background pays homage to the angular forms of his paintings. One can tell that Cairns has a genuine affection for his subject, and this may be a decisive factor.

Even though Milsom has a bond with Waterstreet, who helped to get him out of the slammer, his depiction is coldly objective. It makes me think of that moment in a Hammer horror when Christopher Lee appears framed in a doorway, welcoming his guests to Castle Dracula. You'd feel a lot happier sitting down for a chat with Peter Powditch.

This throws the subjectivity of the trustees into the spotlight. Do they allow judgment to overpower personal taste? Do they pick a winner based on rigorous formal criteria, or simply choose a picture that feels right? Do they expect to be challenged by a work, or would they prefer a painting that makes them feel comfortable?

Kim Leutwyler's portrait of model and activist, Ollie Henderson, *Start the Riot*, is so immediately likeable it inspires caution. It's beautifully painted, has a vibrant sense of colour, and gives the impression that the artist feels a genuine admiration for her subject. Yet Leutwyler's splashes of colour have a randomness that comes across as blandly decorative. It's a superficial brand of abstraction that provides no more than a jazzy backdrop for a careful likeness.

By contrast, Angus McDonald takes no liberties with his portrait of singer Abbe May, posed against a black void, her arms raised above her head. The bare torso might seem a sensuous touch, but May looks stern rather than seductive. It's an ambiguous image that could be seen as assertive or defensive. Compared to Leutwyler, McDonald seems less sure of his subject and maintains a critical distance.

In the same central gallery there's much to like about Kerry McInnis' understated portrait of poet, Omar Musa, but it lacks the edge required from an Archibald contender. Jiawei Shen's portrait of Judith Neilson, founder of the White Rabbit Gallery, has the contrary problem, being rather too edgy. Neilson's broad smile is an unsettling feature, making one conscious of how few portraits ever reveal a subject's teeth. The reason there is no other picture in this show with any dental action is because a figure showing his or her teeth always has a slightly manic appearance. We smile in snapshots, but paintings seem to call for stately repose.

Shen has made the smile even more alarming by the device of the white rabbit that rears up sightlessly on Neilson's lap. It makes both subject and rabbit seem feral. It's a strange experiment for such an experienced portraitist.

So far I haven't ventured out of the central gallery. When we look into the other rooms there is hardly anything that would have been a possible winner, but the overall quality of the selection feels more consistent than previous years. There is a lively blend of large and small paintings, and a high percentage of first-timers, included at the expense of established Archibald veterans. Curator, Anne Ryan, has provided a sensible hang,

avoiding past excesses that saw paintings skied over doorways.

Among other notable works this year, one might cite a self-portrait by the reliable Robert Hannaford, showing a little more grey hair than previously, but still standing proudly. Andrew Sayers has painted an intense, sinewy likeness of art historian Tim Bonyhady that stands out in an entrance gallery that is much less cringeworthy than in the past. One might also look to Filippa Buttitta's serene and touching portrait of artist, Judy Cassab, and Rodney Pople's cartoonish image of Frannie Hopkirk, which still manages to catch something characteristic in the face and expression.

In *Smoke & Mirrors (Uncle Max Eulo)*, Blak Douglas (aka Adam Hill) gives us a monumental head of an elderly Indigenous man, who glares out at us defiantly. It sets up a fascinating contrast with Richard Bell's subdued self-portrait, called *Me*, which wears a troubled expression. Perhaps Bell can see a new generation of urban Indigenous artists on the horizon.

Tianli Zu has captured the ghost of former AGNSW director, Edmund Capon, standing in a darkened doorway, distinguished only by a pair of bright green shoes. Leslie Rice has painted fellow artist, Luke Sciberras, as Bacchus, in a dark mythological scene. It's a poor likeness, but a remarkably accurate record of the Hill End lifestyle.

Peter Churcher's portrait of his mother, Betty, on her deathbed, is the saddest sight in this year's show. The only competition comes from Tom Carment's *Self-portrait at 60*, which, perhaps through excessive modesty, looks more like a self-portrait at 80.

The hidden gag in this year's hang has Marc Etherington's portrait of artist, Del Kathryn Barton sitting primly in her lounge room, staring blank-faced at Sophia Hewson's peculiar self-portrait that resembles an outdoor, lesbian S & M session. After all the riotous sexual content of her own paintings one might think Del wouldn't be so easily shocked.

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/archibald-prize-2015-firsttime-finalists-bring-new-life-to-the-contest-20150713-qiaw9d.html>



Jack van Tongeren's submission of Fredrick Töben did not earn a classification.

The elderly Queensland farmer who took on a big bank - and won



[60 Minutes](#) 1:21am August 31, 2015



Charlie Phillott is the 81-year-old farmer from outback Queensland who took on the might of the ANZ Bank... and won.

An 81-year-old Queensland farmer has won his fight to regain his family property after taking on the ANZ bank and winning.

Five years ago, Charlie Phillott was told he and his family were being evicted from Carisbrooke Station and their loan had been defaulted.

After living on the Winton farm for more than 50 years, the Phillotts were told by ANZ they had 20 days to leave, despite never missing a loan repayment.

Because of the drought, ANZ had halved the value of the property and forced Mr Phillott off his land.

But after a lengthy legal battle and the personal intervention of the bank's CEO Mike Smith, the Phillotts have now been handed back their farm.

It was a stark turnaround from May, when the bank demanded Mr Phillott stump up \$600,000 to buy back the central-west Queensland property or accept \$25,000 to walk away and stay quiet.

"It's taking time to digest," Mr Phillott told Michael Usher on 60 Minutes.

"We don't celebrate it.

"We're thankful for it but it was a long time they put us through it for no reason at all.

"It was unnecessary [and] it should never have happened."



Charlie Phillott with ANZ CEO Michael Smith. (60 Minutes)

Mr Smith travelled to the remote property to personally apologise to the Phillotts for their ordeal, which included administration errors and bullying tactics.

Speaking on Carisbrooke Station, Mr Smith said he felt compelled to personally apologise to the family.

"I felt we had not covered ourselves in glory, to be perfectly honest.

"There was quite a bit of fault on our part.

"He will get his farm back. I felt the right thing to do was to come up and shake his hand and say 'we'll fix it up,'."

During the episode, 60 Minutes' cameras captured Mr Smith's personal apology to the farmer and his family.

"I really apologise for what we've put you through," the CEO was overheard saying.
"It's not been our finest hour, I don't think.
"I'm sorry I wasn't there when you came down to Melbourne."
Mr Smith said he had personally ordered a review of the bank's handling of farm cases and the head of the division responsible for the Phillott's case has since been removed.
"Inevitably with the sheer size of the organisation, we get it wrong," he said.
"I admit that. We can't always get it right.

"This was an unfortunate case, this case was unique in how it was dealt with.
"I'm very sorry for it."
The settlement between ANZ and the Phillotts is believed to run into six figures, aimed at helping the family restore Carisbrooke to its former glory.
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<http://www.9news.com.au/national/2015/08/31/01/21/the-elderly-queensland-farmer-who-took-on-a-big-bank-and-won>

Kangaroo Court of Australia

Internet Truth Train runs over journalist Paul Bongiorno who is caught pushing Union lies for \$\$\$



The Internet Truth Train is about to claim another victim in veteran Channel 10 journalist Paul Bongiorno who has been caught out lying and deceiving on behalf of the Unions.

It is also now worth revisiting Mr Bongiorno's time as a priest, friendship with Cardinal George Pell and when he lived with notorious paedophile Gerard Ridsdale.

The first to write about Bongiorno's support of the Unions seems to be Fairfax Media's Paul Sheehan in Sunday's paper (30-8-15). Sheehan focused on the lies Bongiorno has been telling and but does not seem to understand why he is doing it. The answer is simple and that is Bongiorno is on the Union's payroll via his job writing for The New Daily which is owned by the Industry Super Funds who are in turn controlled by the Unions.

What is very disturbing is that one of the Industry Super Funds which owns [The New Daily](#) is [CBUS](#) which has been investigated by the Trade Union Royal Commission and has been found to have [acted corruptly](#). CBUS is in effect one of Bongiorno's bosses.

The Paul Bongiorno – Union sting

Paul Bongiorno worked for Channel 10 for many years as a journalist. It says this about him on The New Daily website:

Paul Bongiorno AM is a veteran of the Canberra Press Gallery, with 40 years' experience covering Australian politics. He is Contributing Editor for Network Ten, appears on Radio National Breakfast and writes a weekly column on national affairs for The New Daily. He tweets at [@PaulBongiorno](#).

Mr Bongiorno has also written for The Saturday Paper. The New Daily is well-known in the media as being nothing more than a Union troll site. But the average person would not know that so having someone well known like Bongiorno to push their propaganda could be more successful than it might otherwise be. Even more so when he does it in other media like The Saturday Paper or on Twitter where Bongiorno conceals his paid association with The New Daily and therefore his paid relationship with the Unions.

A prime example is Sheehan's article which says:

"Now that all the correspondence leading to Heydon's decision not to give the 2015 Sir Garfield Barwick Address has become public, it is obvious that he never saw the address as an overtly political event. He was clearly under a misapprehension."

"In the relentless campaign to get rid of him, the case has become significantly more tainted and dubious than Heydon's original error of judgement."

"Typical of the over-reach was The Saturday Paper which on July 11 published a piece under the headline, "Bill Shorten and the \$80 million unions royal commission". It was written by Paul Bongiorno, a former long-term journalist with network TEN."

"The headline was based on Bongiorno's reference to "Tony Abbott's \$80 million unions royal commission". No source was given for this apparent 30 per cent blow-out in the cost of the inquiry."

"The figures on the website of the royal commission tell a different story. Its operating budget is \$61 million, over two years. This includes the cost of an Australian Federal Police taskforce. As of June 30, 2015, the royal commission had cost \$28 million."

"It was not only within budget, it was under budget."

"Bongiorno went on to write: "The Prime Minister is oblivious to the dangerous political precedent he has set with his Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption. All that matters to him is immediate political advantage."

"He subsequently used Twitter to ramp up his attacks – August 13: "The game's over for Dyson Heydon". August 19: "Our pathetic, do-nothing government". August 21: "Abbott and Heydon unmasked". August 27: "He [Heydon] must go.". ([Click here to read more](#))

Now when you know that Paul Bongiorno is on the Unions' payroll it is very clear why is telling the lies he is and pushing the Union propaganda. Mr Bongiorno makes no mention of his writing for The New Daily on his [Twitter account](#) or on his profile on [The Saturday Paper](#). Wonder why?

A lot of what Bongiorno says is factually wrong and other claims he does not support with any evidence. Unions are using him and his credibility being associated with Channel 10 to push their propaganda. Others are clearly noticing his deliberate lies as the Paul Sheehan article shows.

Some of his other recent Tweets are telling.

 Paul Bongiorno @PaulBongiorno · Aug 24
So 4 Corners starts off with a big lie on the Royal Commission. Shorten always a target.

  116  73 

I have followed the Royal Commission closely and Shorten was never much of a target in the beginning except for his role in covering up the Julia Gillard / Bruce Wilson AWU fraud. The Royal Commission has barely covered Shorten's role in the Gillard matter but has uncovered a lot of issues that no one ever knew about until the Royal Commission started investigating. Shorten is an obvious target now though.

Bongiorno's claim is weak at best and it is a bit rich for him to say Four Corners is lying given his \$80million lie regarding the cost of the Trade Union Royal Commission.

 Paul Bongiorno @PaulBongiorno · Aug 27
Dyson Heydon again delays ruling on union commission amid tip-off claims He must go gu.com/p/4bpqj?CMP=Sh...

  58  29  [View summary](#)

On Thursday the 27th of August the Unions asked Dyson Heydon to put off his judgment so they could make further submissions and they also requested further documents. Yet if you read Bongiorno's Tweet above he implies that Dyson Heydon has deliberately delayed his judgment and then says "He must go". Bongiorno is acting as a propaganda man for his boss who are the Unions.

So Paul Bongiorno clearly has a conflict of interest being on the Union payroll while attacking Dyson Heydon and the Royal Commission with lies. Yet Bongiorno thinks it is OK to conceal his Union links from the reader. Bongiorno is one very dodgy person and one hell of a hypocrite.

Paul Bongiorno, Cardinal George Pell and Father Gerald Ridsdale

Paul Bongiorno was a Priest in Ballarat and went to school with Cardinal [George Pell](#). Like Pell, Bongiorno also shared a presbytery with paedophile and defrocked priest Gerald Ridsdale. Whether all three lived together at the same time I do not know. Bongiorno says he knew nothing of Ridsdale's crimes:

"I had no idea what he was up to," he said. "And when people look at me quizzically, I say let me tell you this. "There are married men and women now who sleep with their husbands and wives and don't know that their husband or wife is having an affair.

"Let me tell you that Ridsdale never came to the presbytery in Warrnambool and said, 'Guess how many boys I've raped today'. ([Click here to read more](#))

There are a number of problems I have with Bongiorno's denial of knowing what Ridsdale was doing.

Firstly, his good friend George Pell supported Ridsdale in court when he had pleaded guilty, so it didn't bother Pell. And we know by the below Tweet on the 26th August 2015 that Bongiorno is still a supporter of George Pell which a lot of people would find sickening given Pell's role in the abuse cover-up.

 Paul Bongiorno @PaulBongiorno · Aug 26
Another fact from history George Pell at constitutional convention gave a strong republican speech.

  11  5 

Secondly, we now know given his sell out to Union crooks that Paul Bongiorno is a compulsive liar who lacks integrity and honesty. So anything he says should be questioned. It is well known that a lot of people in the church [covered-up Gerald Ridsdale's abuse of children](#) including George Pell and it looks likely that Paul Bongiorno is another one of them.

Like most crooks Paul Bongiorno thought he would never be caught being paid to tell lies regarding the Trade Union Royal Commission. And it now looks like Paul Bongiorno has a few skeletons in his closet. But the Internet Truth Train is catching up with all journalists who lie and deceive. Bongiorno isn't the first and he won't be the last.

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<http://kangaroocourtofaustralia.com/2015/09/02/internet-truth-train-runs-over-journalist-paul-bongiorno-who-is-caught-pushin...>

Department of disgrace

IBAC investigates Victoria's rotten education bureaucracy

By [Catherine Ford](#), *Monthly, August 2015*

In early June, Nino Napoli, a senior executive with the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET),

stepped into a witness box and began to answer some long overdue questions.

Until his recent sacking, Napoli had been a highly paid financial manager responsible for multi-billion-dollar state education budgets. He'd also been a member of an allegedly corrupt corps of DET managers, and was in Melbourne's County Court to give evidence to Victoria's Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) about large sums of money allegedly stolen from schools' funds over roughly two decades.



Former Victorian education department executive Nino Napoli (left) and lawyer Leighton Gwynn leave the IBAC hearing in Melbourne, June 2015. © Tracey Nearmy / AAP

Napoli's appearance drew a crowd. Dressed in a pinstripe suit, and with a conspicuous toupee of tousled ginger-tipped spikes, he cut an odd figure even in a building where strange wigs are common. Napoli's evidence was stranger still. Drawn by the counsel assisting, Ian Hill QC, into increasingly profound exchanges, Napoli gave the impression that IBAC was tapping on the tip of an iceberg.

Hill: The scheme is open to ... grave abuse [...]

Napoli: Yes, Mr Hill, the potential is there, absolutely.

Hill: Yes, and you're the living embodiment of [that potential] because you abused ...

Napoli: Well, I'm an – I'm a ...

Hill: Just a *moment*. You abused your position of trust.

Napoli: I – I – absolutely – and, with regret, what I've done was – was – *dreadful*. And all I'm saying, Mr Hill, is that just as I've been able to do that, which was not something of a – of a – of such a difficult scheme, it's – it's – it's open to – to others. That's all I'm saying.

Hill: Yes. What we would be interested in is your view as to how to stop people like yourself.

Napoli: I have – I have some – very good ideas about that, sir. We can talk about that at some stage.

Napoli had conducted his dealings in the DET until a whistleblower acted in early 2013. Shortly after IBAC investigators went in pursuit of the evidence, Napoli suffered a heart attack and took leave. But for department staff who were alleging Napoli and his colleagues bullied them into submission, or who had lost their jobs after not co-operating, the investigation was a relief. A former senior employee said to me, anonymously, that she and others had *run* to IBAC, to report what they knew.

After two years of IBAC investigations, 50 people gave evidence in hearings from April to June, with 39 of these preceding Napoli. By most accounts, he was manifestly unfit for public service – a number suggested he was a grossly incompetent financial manager; others, a pathological liar, an inveterate thief and a bully. A female accountant alleged Napoli was given to terrible rages in

head office, in which he became highly aggressive and went "completely berserk".

The commission also heard Napoli "brainwashed" his young adult children into perpetuating his deceptions; they'd received more than \$100,000 from the DET for work they hadn't done. His sons provided harrowing evidence at the hearings; one telling the hearing his father was "delusional", and his professional life was "one big fucking lie".

It seemed that, right up until this June morning, Napoli's feints had been so outrageous that almost no one had the courage to mention them.

Victoria's IBAC has had its own critics since its inception in 2011, for being more of a lapdog than a watchdog. Operation Ord (investigating "alleged serious corruption at the DET"), however, proved what IBAC *could* do. Empowered to install bugging devices in suspects' homes and offices, take covert photography (mostly in suburban cafes) and send forensic accountants down byzantine money trails, Ord produced, at the very least, an abject spectacle of incompetent and criminally inclined senior public servants "at work".

It exposed a fiefdom operating within the DET, allegedly creaming off significant sums of money from schools' funding. It uncovered cultures of self-serving executive "leadership", and found critical structural flaws in the DET's funding arrangements and areas of governance. The machinations behind the complicit managers' brazen mateship deals were aired for all to see.

And not before time, according to the teachers and principals watching proceedings. "Most of us were aware for years that the bureaucratic hub of the system was rotten," a recently retired principal told me. "As long as you could keep them at bay you could do what you were paid to do: teach kids." Another ex-principal, who muttered savagely throughout the hearings, vented to me during a break. "You have *no* idea how most staff struggle with inadequate funding for schools. Meanwhile, these jokers lined their own pockets? I have come in to *eyeball* these bastards."

A primary-school teacher, attending IBAC around her classes, put it to me in language a prep child could understand. "Head office has been a boys' club since Madame Butterfly was a caterpillar!" she said. "I've been buying my students basic items – think jumbo crayons and picture books – with my own money for years, because I was told the school's budget didn't allow for such things."

With such an audience, IBAC Commissioner Stephen O'Bryan QC, a lanky man with Harpo Marx curls and a falcon's gaze, might well have felt supported. O'Bryan warned one unhelpful witness that the commission had "truckloads" of evidence of "services, goods and the like not received by the school". He was also obliged, repeatedly, to remind dissembling witnesses they were under oath, and that perjury attracted jail sentences.

At one point, O'Bryan pressed an otherwise lucid witness – a businesswoman implicated in the alleged laundering of DET money, attending the hearing in towering heels adorned with bows, and with diamond and pearl rings on her fingers – about her chronic memory lapses. "Have you got any *medical* condition?" O'Bryan parried from the bench. "No *memory* problems that you could enlighten me about?"

Counsel assisting – Ian Hill QC, Ted Woodward SC and Amber Harris – would establish, in often tense exchanges, that an operation had disguised a “round robin” of DET money being diverted into private holdings. Media reports – the front page of the *Age* newspaper, for one – alleged the combined misuse of DET money, under IBAC’s purview, was in the order of “hundreds of millions of dollars”.

The questions exchanged in the gallery weren’t so much about why it had occurred, but what would be done about it. One woman, who told me she had “crawled out of [her] teaching career, spent”, asked the pressing question: how far up the bureaucratic chain did the alleged corrupt conduct extend?

IBAC scrutinised activities between 2007 and 2014, when at least four DET mandarins – Nino Napoli (then director of school resources), Jeff Rosewarne (deputy secretary and acting secretary); Darrell Fraser (deputy secretary) and John Allman (regional director) – are alleged to have misappropriated funds.

Napoli had been responsible for school resource funding budgets since 1992 – most recently, \$5.5 billion out of an \$11 billion total – and enjoyed unfettered discretion over an annual branch budget of \$1 million.

The commission heard there were two forms of theft allegedly operating within the department. One involved misusing credit cards and expense accounts. The other centred on a virtually undocumented, and formally discredited, method of administering school grants known as Program Co-ordinator Schools, or “banker schools”. Banker schools began in the ‘90s during a push to decentralise management and hand budget control to individual principals. Some within the DET entrusted selected schools to hold funds in high-yield bank accounts to pay for earmarked programs. Banker-school monies, however, were rarely used for educational programs within the schools actually holding the money. This set-up, it was heard, was exploited by those under investigation as a way of hiding illegitimate expenditure, in some cases for years well beyond IBAC’s seven-year scope.

Napoli told the hearing that the banker-school system was designed for “schools getting together, collaborating and making things administratively simple”. In reality, it was what one witness described as a “phantom finance system”.

When Neil Loveless, an internal auditor who had heroically descended into a departmental rabbit hole to seek proof of the banker-school structure, gave evidence, he sounded like someone in need of a hyperbaric chamber. “Look,” he said, his face reddening with frustration, “the culture of the place is that ... banker schools *don’t exist* ... And there’s no policy, procedures or practices that define a banker school *anywhere* ... I mean, you can’t do an audit of a system that doesn’t actually *exist* ...”

IBAC alleged that Napoli, Rosewarne, Fraser and Allman each “had their [own] banker schools”, and that these schools’ principals and office staff were chosen because they would either do the executives’ bidding or turn a blind eye to the questionable use of funds.

Allegedly, the laudable simplicity of the system had, in Napoli’s case, allowed him to divert some \$2.5 million of DET money, in just seven years, into his own accounts. Counsel assisting spent days, in dramatic explication,

describing how that paper trail unfolded. Napoli, it was explained, would send tax invoices, marked as goods and services required by the DET, from his home computer to that of Carlo Squillaciotti, his cousin. Squillaciotti – along with Napoli and Carlo’s brother, Luigi – was a director of five companies purporting to be, variously, printers and stationers, an employment agency and a video production company. He would send the invoices, complete with phony company letterheads, tax invoice numbers and contact names, to the chosen banker schools, as directed by Napoli. (One such Napoli-Squillaciotti company was named “Quill Proprietary Ltd, Printing and Stationary [sic]” – a business Ian Hill QC derided, in an aside, as the “printing company that never moved”.)

When banker-school principals or office managers received the sham invoices, they were then instructed by Napoli to pay them out of DET grant money parked at their schools – which had been allocated to them by Napoli.

Again, Loveless gave compelling testimony about what his audits had dragged into the light. “The thing that amazed me about the whole thing was that there was money flowing all over the place ... and it was just on the flimsiest of documentation. Sometimes they – a program area or a [deputy secretary] – would fill out a general expenses claim form, which is the sort of stuff that you would, you know, pay your *tea money* on, and they would move \$250,000 from one area to another, and there was no justification for it, there was no explanation of it ... I was just gobsmacked by how simple it was for large sums of monies to move from program areas to regions and from regions to schools.”

The apparently gross waste and mismanagement of DET funds also extended to international travel. It was “just chaos”, he said.

“We live in an age where you’ve got Skype and you’ve got Google and you’ve got heaps of resources that you can actually look at to work out how the Finland education system is actually working. But the first thing a lot of our principals want to do is jump on a plane and go to Helsinki! So these are the sorts of things that probably need to be explored – or get somebody out from Helsinki and find out what was going on. But you don’t want to have 500 principals going [to] Helsinki to find out what’s going on.”

Commissioner O’Bryan interrupted Loveless to confirm a point.

O’Bryan: So, are you saying that you came across one instance of a lump sum being paid out from, what, central office under the guise of tea money, *literally*?

Loveless: No. It was put into an account at a school called tea money.

O’Bryan: Put into the tea money account at the school?

Loveless: Yes, yes.

O’Bryan: Roughly how much are we talking about?

Loveless: \$3 million.

IBAC found that the banker-school system was mostly overlooked, until a giant hole appeared in the DET ledger in Napoli’s area. A hole that Jenny Zahara – a whistleblower accountant – called “a bit of a deficit issue”, which had been detected in a “bucket” that needed plugging after “about 80 or 90 million dollars” had dropped out of the bottom of it.

Rewards for principals and office managers who did the executives’ bidding came mostly in the form of nepotism

and favouritism. Some principals were promoted into management positions, mostly in head office, without transparent process; they, and staff, were often granted overseas "information gathering" trips. Mary Hannett, an office manager at Chandler Park Primary School, who'd signed off on Napoli's invoices totalling more than \$150,000, scored seven overseas trips in one year, and received \$10,500 in bonuses over four months.

But IBAC's investigations hit a wall, it seemed, trying to locate where the DET money went once it landed in Napoli's family trust fund.

In both Luigi and Carlo Squillaciotti's examinations, Ian Hill QC struggled to pull together a full picture of the Napoli-Squillaciotti assets and investment properties. Even when Commissioner O'Bryan issued a dire warning to Carlo Squillaciotti – that "there are very serious penalties for perjury ... that's lying under oath. Up to ten years' imprisonment. Now, *let's have an answer*" – little was illuminated.

The Squillaciotti brothers gave three days' evidence. Carlo, the more outwardly serene of the brothers, stared imperiously down his nose at Hill. His affectlessness – marble-clad expression, shoulder shrugs – suggested he didn't consider the allegations as something to get worked up about.

Luigi, whose fingertips were black from fixing cars, was more forthcoming. Although he, too, gave the impression – dwarfed, as he was, in an enormous coat that he kept on at all times – of a person insulated from the gravity of the situation.

IBAC had bugged Cobra Motors, Luigi's car workshop, for covert recordings. Panicked and expletive-laden exchanges from the workshop's rear office were played during the hearing. The men could be heard scheming about how to hide the spreadsheets and hard drives involving DET money they'd allegedly stolen, mostly through banker schools. In one exchange, they argued bitterly about hiding places. Napoli had scrambled into his mother's attic to hide his DET archive there. Luigi chastised him for this stupidity.

Commissioner O'Bryan [grilling Luigi Squillaciotti about the recording played to the commission]: I thought I picked up the word "underground" when you were speaking towards the end there. Were you speaking about somewhere to hide [the DET spreadsheets] underground?

Luigi Squillaciotti [shrugging]: Underground. I might have mentioned that. I can't recall.

O'Bryan: Yes. What did you have in mind? Where was the underground location?

Luigi Squillaciotti: Bury it [...]

Ian Hill QC: Well, what precisely were you suggesting then?

Luigi Squillaciotti: That ... if [Napoli] wanted to hide something, he should do something better than his mother's place!

After another audio clip, Hill questioned Carlo Squillaciotti on its contents.

Hill: And your brother [Luigi], when he said, "I'll be fucked to Jesus Christ," was indicating his concern about ... the file that [IBAC investigators] had got out of [the] office ... he didn't sound very happy there, did he?

Carlo Squillaciotti: No.

Hill: And your brother says, "I've got a feeling, as much as I hate to think it, I reckon Nino's going to do time,

and I reckon there's a good chance Carlo's going to ... fucking go in. Yeah. And I'm fucking – I could go as well." What did you say to your brother Luigi ... to give him the impression that there was a chance you could go to jail? [...]

Carlo Squillaciotti: False payments. False payments. False invoices.

Jeff Rosewarne, former deputy secretary and acting secretary, is mentioned by the brothers in these recordings as someone who needs to be urgently telephoned and spoken to.

Hill, attempting to get to the bottom of the banker-school rorts, would also question Napoli. In one exchange, Napoli gave the room a farcical brushstroke tutorial in how an executive who controls vast sums of public money in a large government bureaucracy might work.

Hill: Are there any other avenues that you think the investigators should be looking at in respect to corruption within the [DET]?

Napoli [in helpful, consultative mode]: *Goodness* ... I don't know that I could do justice in going through, you know, the *complete* detail of it all, because it would take ... [shaking his head, indicating how long it would take to explain his and his colleagues' behaviour] ... but just to give you the *broad* sense, I think the concept of the co-ordinator school, banker schools, needs a pretty good review. I think the guidelines and the way that those things are operated, and the volume of money that goes through them, needs some – a *thorough* look at.

Hill also questioned Napoli about end-of-year surpluses and the allocation of bonuses.

Hill: If there was a surplus held by those within the department at the end of the financial year, how was that dealt with? Let's take, for example, one of the executives, Mr Fraser.

Napoli: OK. I would approach Mr Fraser with perhaps maybe a week in the financial year to go ... I would say, "Mr Fraser – Darrell I would call him – look, it looks like there'll be a couple of million, two and a half, three, four, five million, what do you want me to do?" [And] he would provide me with a list of grants to various schools to be made. And there would be very little description, because it wasn't my place to – I'm not an educationalist, so – I would simply make those grants to schools. And off they would ...

Hill: Would any of the executives reward themselves in any way?

Napoli: Would – sorry?

Hill: *Reward* themselves in any way? Let's take overseas travel, for example.

Napoli: Like, how would you know? Because you could park the money – you could park the money into a [banker] school and then take the travel seven months later.

Hill, illustrating the point, tendered to the commission two unforgettable photos of Rosewarne and Napoli "taking it easy" on a DET-funded holiday to the UK and Italy. (Their wives went with them for part of the trip, too; airfares, accommodation and expenses paid, via false invoices, to the tune of \$15,000.) One photo shows Rosewarne and Napoli grinning in front of Buckingham Palace. The second shows them lying together – school camp-like – on a double bed in a well-appointed hotel room. Napoli, looking at the photos on the courtroom's

screens, was suddenly mortified. "Jesus!" he exclaimed. "I'm a *lot* fatter there, aren't I?"

IBAC investigations showed where at least some school funding ended up. An incomplete list includes: a curated wine cellar stored in Jeff Rosewarne's garage; two coffee machines (total worth \$5000), also for Rosewarne; overseas holidays with wives, associates and staff; overseas "study tours" that produced neither reports nor documented expenditure; a party at The Apartment nightclub for Rosewarne's 50th, invoiced as "professional development" for \$6000; and a "planning retreat" at a Yarra Valley resort, where Darrell Fraser – according to three witnesses – drank so much he had to be assisted out of the venue, and was so hungover he was incapable of delivering the presentation executives had apparently travelled to hear.

Of the many emails tendered and displayed on screens, just a handful were needed to illuminate the executives' "mates at play" credo. A lunch invitation, emailed from a "Maddo" – a supposedly independent consultant associated with a turf company, then tearing up school ovals to pave them with synthetic grass – to "The Italian Stallion" (Nino Napoli) and "The Bushfire Legend" (Jeff Rosewarne) read:

"Boys! I'm confirming lunch at the Waiters on Friday ... to hear about Nino and Jeff's important overseas work for the government and to help Mick spend some of his exorbitant consultancy fees."

The "boys", Maddo told the commission, met for such lunches every three weeks, at the very least.

But these were just the more picaresque forms of malfeasance in the department. As a DET official told me, while sharing a descending elevator in the County Court, there was "far worse to come".

In week three of the hearings, three senior DET staff members gave evidence that they'd been harassed, humiliated and alienated for raising concerns about suspect behaviour. All three reported being exiled either to an office "gulag" or "naughty corner". One had been "punished" by having her budget slashed from \$160 million to \$5 million, and her staff numbers reduced from 50 to nine. Another had taken leave because of anxiety and ill health. All three had eventually done what some colleagues hoped for, and left the department altogether. Gail Hart, one of these witnesses, had been a DET general manager responsible for business transactions, and a chair of the Accredited Purchasing Unit (APU) for nine years, until 2010. She reported to the DET deputy secretary Jeff Rosewarne.

Hart, a petite woman whose hands trembled throughout her testimony, told the commission that any exemptions to the department's regulation tender process – purchases above \$100,000 and below \$1 million were to be put out to public tender – required her authorisation. Hart explained she had "come under pressure" from Rosewarne because "executives were complaining that I was too strict, that I wasn't letting things through that should go through, that I was being pedantic". When she and the APU rejected one particular requested exemption because it wasn't competitive, "Jeff called me in [and] said, 'You need to work this out. You need to get it over the line.'" One executive told her, "Look, I don't understand what the issue is. This is the company I want so just – why can't I have it?" Hart clenched her jaw. "I

was just furious that that was his attitude," she said. "That someone as senior as him would think, you know, 'This is who I want. Why should I go out to tender and waste time and money?'"

Hart told the commission she was asked by then department secretary Grant Hehir to scrutinise Darrell Fraser's personal expense claims, which Hehir felt to be suspect, most of which were "lunches or dinners in restaurants". "The restaurants were expensive," she added, and "a *lot* of alcohol was on the bills." She recalled Fraser had taken the then minister, Lynne Kosky, and her husband and two children to lunch. Hart held her breath, then proceeded. "It's not appropriate for a public servant to take the minister and her *family* to lunch or dinner," she said, quietly.

Hehir then instructed Hart to "meet with Mr Fraser and ask him to repay some of the monies relating to various expenses ... I don't know why he asked me," Hart said, tremulously. Fraser was senior to Hart; Hehir was senior to Fraser. "I mean, I – I must admit," Hart quavered, "I was a little bit shocked to be asked to do that."

Fraser "wasn't very happy", Hart stressed, but then he merely took a detour around her and hid his expenditure by charging things to a credit card he gave to a relatively junior public servant named Steve Sullivan. Asked who approved Sullivan's personal expenses, Hart replied, "Mr Fraser."

At about this time, Fraser and Rosewarne stopped submitting receipts for expenses, Hart reported. Instead they submitted statutory declarations declaring their receipts lost. "Not only were [stat decs] used for lunches and dinners in Australia," Hart told the commission, "they were also used when Mr Fraser and Mr Rosewarne travelled overseas." When she confronted Rosewarne on the matter, he "just shrugged his shoulders".

Hart's testimony went on so long she was asked if she needed a break. She shook her head and ploughed on. She said Fraser and Rosewarne pushed her to "work around" processes that weren't transparent, particularly in relation to implementing the Ultranet IT system. (It cost \$180 million before being abandoned, and will be the subject of further IBAC investigations.) Hart gave a relatively small, but telling, example of the behaviour common during Ultranet's implementation. Five DET staff went to the UK during that period, with Rosewarne insisting they fly business class. Hart refused the demand, knowing that only the premier could approve such an upgrade. Rosewarne sent a message to her that "he was the 'dep sec' and he could do what he liked". The staff flew business class.

Hart said Rosewarne frequently raised his voice at her. "I used to just, I suppose, grin and bear it," she told the hearing. "I did start looking for other jobs in other departments." Which was just as well – a messenger advised her that Rosewarne had restructured her position out of existence.

On Day 12, an imposing man with a face furrowed with frown lines strode into the courtroom, took an oath and galvanised the hearing with his evidence. Dr Stephen Brown, whose nervous wife watched from the gallery, was doubly striking, coming as he did after a week-long parade of school principals in the witness box, all of whom, bar one, had been slouch-shouldered, jargon-spouting automatons who had facilitated allegedly

corrupt transactions by merely doing what they were told.

In this company, Brown seemed a towering figure of integrity. A highly qualified ex-teacher, he had left the position of Queensland's executive director of schools in 2005, to move to Victoria where he eventually became the state's executive director for literacy and numeracy, and was a possible future contender for DET secretary.

Brown gave evidence on what he termed a "completely unethical practice by a number of people in the leadership team in the department at the time".

Brown conducted a 2010 audit into the banker-school system, and urged that it be abolished – a recommendation strenuously rejected by the DET's most senior management. Brown found there was no "central, system-wide, transparent list of banker schools". The audit was unable to get even a sense of how banker schools were appointed. The 2010 recommendations went as far as the then acting DET secretary Jeff Rosewarne's desk, and no further.

Brown told the commission that a "caucus" – including Darrell Fraser and John Allman – routinely met prior to fortnightly departmental meetings to ram through their agendas. Fraser, sensing a rival, pursued Brown with outbursts of "obvious anger and displeasure". Brown told of his amazement at the "very brazen and arrogant" sense of entitlement, not to mention a "significant embedded culture of drinking, and lunching", among the executives in head office. Brown brokered a meeting with Professor Peter Dawkins, then head of the department, to raise these matters, and twice emailed Helen Silver, then head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, about this "boozy, blokey culture". His emails went unanswered.

Most staff within the department, Brown asserted, wouldn't speak their mind about what was going on "because of retribution or fear". It was "pretty well known," Brown said, "that Mr Fraser was a heavy drinker ... On quite a number of occasions, public occasions for the department, there was *quite* clear evidence that [Fraser] was fairly inebriated." Brown told the hearing that Allman was Fraser's "emissary"; Allman would tell Brown how he "did things for 'the dazzler', and how [Fraser] was at the moment, what mood he was in, what state he was in". Allman was a "go-between", Brown said, "a trader of information".

Brown approached James Kelly, the DET's head of audit, about banker schools, and the executives involved. Kelly assured Brown they would be scrutinised, but very little was done. Brown and Gail Hart had both been placed, by this stage, in a "temporary office position away from the main area, almost like a gulag", Brown said. "And so it just so happened we started talking about what [we'd] seen ... she was just distraught, like I was, about what ... we were seeing."

Brown eventually approached Fraser, to tell him he "needed, for my own family and my own health ... to get out". Brown had resolved to return to Queensland, but "adopted a mature approach" and arranged to meet with Fraser to "resolve this, so we can move on, even though we perhaps don't like each other".

Gripping the courtroom's witness box so hard his knuckles whitened, Brown continued. "So, the meeting took place across at the hotel opposite St Andrews Place, in a room," he said, pausing briefly, gulping air. "I walked into the room with much trepidation, and he

[Fraser] was sitting there with a bottle of wine and some cheese and whatever. And he *launched* out of the chair at me, and tried to grab me by my *throat*, and so I grabbed his hand, and pushed him away, and said, 'Don't ever do that again.'"

"You are not a *small* man," Ian Hill QC commented, tangentially.

Later in his account, Brown said he thought it all came down to the values of individuals. He impatiently ticked some basics off: an education system needed strong secretary leadership, good governance practices, a high degree of transparency and accountability, checks and balances. "We need to make sure that we have the best leadership to ensure that the children of this state get the best opportunities and resources. I think there needs to be a really *clear* review. Educators hold a special place in society," he continued, staring ahead sternly. "They hold the hopes and dreams of so many parents, so many people. And if we lose – if the *leaders* lose their moral compass, what chance do those children *have*, if we lose our moral compass?"

The courtroom fell silent, stunned by such passionately held sentiments. As Brown left the box, and O'Bryan adjourned proceedings, those present got to their feet and looked around, dazed and possibly chastened.

In the final week of hearings, the mood in the gallery had hardened to barely disguised disgust; everyone in the courtroom, most particularly the IBAC team, seemed fatigued. But when Jeff Rosewarne entered the witness box for his second IBAC appearance, people's concentration sharpened once more.

A grim-looking man with close-clipped silver hair and a pale-wool suit, Rosewarne sat at an oblique angle to the gallery; only very occasionally did he deign to lock eyes with his interlocutor, the serenely lethal Ian Hill QC. Rosewarne had been recalled to reflect on the testimony of Napoli and the Squillaciotti brothers. Despite the clear paper trail exposed by IBAC, and the testimony of Napoli – that Rosewarne had not only known about Napoli's schemes, but had been involved in false and inflated invoicing for his own gratification – Rosewarne did not crumble, would not freely acknowledge his alleged wrongdoings.

Napoli had made a confession to IBAC. His testimony was heavily sprinkled with the words "yes, sir". Rosewarne, in stark contrast, remained steadfast; his only moment of humility was to thank the tipstaff for filling his water cup. What IBAC didn't learn about Rosewarne from the man himself, it learnt from the witness who followed him.

The DET head of audit James Kelly was a younger executive who reported directly to Rosewarne. He told the hearing how he'd come to believe that Rosewarne – sitting at the very top of the pyramid – was corrupt.

Summoned to Rosewarne's office in early 2011, Kelly believed he was finally, after many months of inaction, getting the secretary's sign-off on the critical audit findings about the department being "ripe" for corruption and fraud.

Instead, what occurred in that meeting made Kelly feel "the blood drain from my face".

Rosewarne wanted reassurance that the "Mildura events" – a notorious incident in the history of the department, Kelly told the hearing, "a meal for a lot of executives at Stefano's which ... involved the sexual harassment of one of the staff members" – were "historical events that

should be left alone ... shouldn't be dragged back up again".

Then Rosewarne cut to the chase. "Are you investigating me?" he demanded of Kelly. At that stage Kelly wasn't, but the very question "flattened" and "shattered" the younger man.

Directly after the meeting, Kelly "went for a walk through Treasury Gardens". He needed air. He needed to get his thoughts in order. He told the commission, "Frankly, I was in trouble."

Did he emerge from the gardens with a plan? Did he go around the "roadblock" at the top, counsel assisting Ted Woodward SC asked, and report what he now knew to the auditor-general?

"In hindsight, should I have gone to the auditor-general?" Kelly said, mouthing the question like a challenged child. "Yes," he told the commission. He should have. But he didn't.

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<https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2015/august/1438351200/catherine-ford/department-disgrace>

Across the Great Divide - Public versus Private Schools

By [Catherine Ford](#) , April 2012



Scene from a public school, circa 1978.

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Australia's two-tiered education system puts parents who believe in a classless society in a morally invidious position.

In the mid 1970s, my conservative, town-dwelling parents uprooted us on a whim. From our comfortable home in a fantastically uneventful suburb of Geelong, we decamped to a farm five hours away, in the north-east of Victoria.

Our new house, wedged between large leasehold properties growing tobacco, looked out across a wide valley towards Mount Buffalo, an enormous prehistoric-looking escarpment with vertical scores on its rock face, a bit like the ones Richard Dreyfuss, in a deranged frenzy, scraped into a pile of mashed potatoes with a table fork in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

My parents weren't about to start a hippy cult and grow chokos. They were at best apolitical people, at worst disengaged Liberal voters, and about as far from alternative, bohemian folk as it's possible to imagine. Our treechange was to amuse my father in his early retirement. In fact, very little changed for my parents. They ate and drank as they had in town, listened to the same records, and played at being farmers when they got the urge. They were living the same life, but with better views.

In my case, though, I was about to be given an enduring lesson in the differences that existed between schoolchildren in one social class and those 400 kilometres away, in another. I was about to have my eyes opened to something big and serious and deeply troubling.

In 1975 I began my second year of high school at the public secondary school nearest our farm, in a town serving, among others, the local woodpulping communities. The tobacco growers in the valley, predominantly southern European families with a long-

held regard for a certain disciplined getting of wisdom, sent their kids, if they could afford it, to the town's Catholic school. My parents, being well-heeled cynics and only nominal Presbyterians, sent me to the laic public high school.

That school was situated along an unmade cul-de-sac on the edge of town, and housed in some spectacularly grim buildings; it was easily the saddest school, if not the saddest set of *buildings*, I had ever clapped eyes on, but I soon got over the aesthetic disenchantments. It was what was going on inside those concrete bunkers and outhouses that I found harder to come to terms with.

School X, as I'll refer to it, was a place where many young graduate teachers, a number of them from the United States and most of them inexperienced and heavily bearded, were brawling with the Department of Education. It was, by then, 18 years into the Victorian Liberal Party's grimly draconian 25-year reign.

There was a lot of industrial action at the school in those years, but there was a protracted, and sometimes bloody, battle being played out in classrooms and playgrounds, too: a struggle between young, underpaid teachers trying to figure out how to teach and young students trying to convey what it was *they* knew, namely frustration, boredom and rage.

It was a fraught place, desperately under-equipped, poorly maintained and clearly abandoned by an indifferent political class. In my first months, I wandered around its grounds and in and out of its classrooms in deep amazement. If I'd glimpsed that kind of impoverishment before, it had been at an imaginative remove – in some social-realist novels I'd been reading, lying on a bedspread in Geelong, or on TV newscasts spied, mid-sandwich, from our kitchen – and I was at a loss comprehending its significance, seeing it firsthand.

School X's teachers were doing their level best but getting it from both ends in what, I now understand, must have been a virtually unwinnable gig – short-changed by employers and overstretched by a difficult student population. What played out in their classrooms was a consequence of this general neglect and the overwhelming demands on their professionalism.

While I diligently carted my textbooks from one miserable, makeshift portable to another, I began to feel like I was part of a fantastic charade of an education; if I used those books a dozen times, that sure as hell was it. There were far more compelling dramas in the classrooms, dramas that took precedence over schoolwork.

A number of boys at the school – very tough, fast-talking kids with intelligence to burn – were there only because they weren't quite old enough to be legally working a bandsaw in the timber mills, or helping work the surrounding hop and tobacco concerns; and maybe because they sensed what was about to be taken from them, they let it be known, loud and clear, that they thought school was for boneheads. Nothing, it seemed, could dissuade these soon-to-be-evicted kids from treating the school as the dysfunctional and failing holding pen that it was.

After a few months, I managed to control the abject terror I'd initially felt, thrown in to the lawlessness of these new classrooms ruled by uncontrollable, insolent, mouthy kids, and fronted by hapless, yelling teachers, and I learnt to give in to the chaos. It was a relief to let go of my fear and resistance, and it felt important to join the revolt (even if it wasn't properly mine, and even if I always had one eye on my unopened books), because there was no fighting it.

I learnt to shrug it off when kids abused teachers, or when teachers became enraged with kids who would or could not learn. I watched with panicky adrenalin surges when students' anger spilled over into something dangerous and criminal.

Once, a very strong, clearly disturbed boy pinned our social sciences teacher by the throat to the blackboard, until one of us had the good sense to raise the alarm with the headmaster. The teacher was eventually released, falling to the floor, purple-faced and gasping.

On another occasion, a boy in the same class turned to the window next to him and with a quick, staccato jab of his right arm shattered both the pane and the nerves of all who saw him do it. I went about my school business after such incidents, but I and the other students were affected – they marked us.

Until my family's move to the foothills of Mount Buffalo, I'd been a student since kindergarten at a parochial private girls' school in Geelong. At this school, crotchety but effective schoolmarm's coddled *their* barbarian, middle-class charges in small, calm, girl-filled classrooms, an environment privileged by the school's bourgeois values and the entitled bullishness of its parents.

I'd been introduced to literature, to Greek and Roman history, to chemistry in its science labs, and to new languages; I'd acted the best male parts in its pompous little theatre productions, become good at tennis in its sports 'academies', and taken up the piano with gusto. My spare time was spent in its brand spanking new library, my dirty little shoes up on its soft furnishings, consuming whatever the librarians, *plural*, had produced that week for me to peruse. I had, in short, thrived on the nauseating principle that, as a product of patrician entitlement and its money, I would be handed countless openings into bookishness, into learning and experimenting and knowing and doing, and feeling as though I was achieving something. I was a confident and outspoken child, often deliriously happy, who felt purposeful. I had adored the school's focused, industrious, high-functioning atmosphere.

So I had some adjusting to do in the countryside. It took me about three months at School X to *get it*, this crash course in a new way of being treated, and to process and absorb what that treatment seemed to be suggesting. Wreaking havoc in class as a response to the school's

ethos, the very *air* in its corridors and classrooms, seemed to be a weird game of child-versus-adult one-upmanship, eventually to be stopped and righted by some powerful, concerned grown-up. No such adult ever appeared.

After years of thinking about this transition – from a privileged school to a chronically underprivileged one – I believe that what was going on in School X's classrooms was an entirely comprehensible, legitimate, urgent, enraged, intuitive 'Fuck you, too' from children who were getting a seriously bum deal. Students at School X were being treated with the utmost contempt by those in the bureaucracy whose remit it was to take care of them, and at some level they must have known it.

As a child who had dropped in from a parallel universe of *purchased* educational opportunity and order, I could have confirmed to those kids that they were right to be furious, had I known how. But, of course, I had no idea why such difference existed, nor of its consequences.

In fact, my knowledge of that reality – that two schools in the same state, at precisely the same time, could be so fundamentally different – produced a great deal of tension in my thinking and behaviour then. I distinctly remember telling myself during those years that it would be best if I never mentioned what I knew to *anyone* at School X: that a grossly unjust, undeserved, stomach-churning split between 'rich' and 'poor' was going on in the world. I was right to believe that this was not something to mention lightly.

Without regular class work, without dedication to our books, I was losing ground academically, but what surprised me was how little I cared. Within a very short space of time I'd learnt not to give a toss that I no longer knew any French or Italian, nor could be bothered to read a novel through to the end, nor could formulate an argument and defend it, nor could care whether I passed a maths test or not.

I'd instead been busy absorbing a culture whose predominant messages were dangerously unambiguous and had been sent, either with conscious malice or just a casual but equally unforgiveable disregard, by those whose job it was to influence and convey them; messages that I, and my fellow students, were more than able to receive and comprehend.

Those messages were: *Nothing really matters. Books are useless where you're headed. Get a job, any job, and quickly. Girls, try not to fall pregnant, but if you do, marry and get on with it. Never take anything too seriously. You are all on your own from here on in. We did our best with nothing, now get out of here and make the most of it. By the way, never come back to complain about what you have been denied.*

Those at the school who, in their mid teens, began to feel that this screed was unacceptable – and I knew a bunch of them – were obliged to take things into their own hands. They went on, with admirable determination and self-discipline, to tertiary education and decent, if not their most desired, careers.

For my part, I begged my parents, after two vividly memorable years, to reconsider their decision. I was promptly sent to a highly academic private boarding school in Melbourne, where I tried to pick up the pieces. I'd fallen so far behind in maths I failed it in Year 10, an enduring and shaming regret; I'd lost too much ground in languages to join my city peers, another loss I raged about for years afterwards. I scrambled to catch up with

my much luckier private-school cohort, suddenly aware of what I'd just missed out on.

After I was well through university and working and raising children, I returned to that country high school for my 20-year reunion. Among the hearty and balding farmers, the dedicated beer fiends planted at the bar, the thirty-something grandmothers still working as sandwich hands in town, I found my old friends – respectively, a musician, a primary school teacher and an accountant, the latter two now a couple with three children.

The most memorable conversation, out of dozens of interesting ones that weekend, was between these people and the then principal of the school, who, trying to flatter us, gestured grandly around the room and said, "When I look around this hall and see what's become of you, I feel a great deal of pride about what our struggling school managed to achieve, in spite of all its deprivations!"

My old friend, by then a partner in a large accounting firm in Melbourne, who got there by leaving for another school in a bigger town, and by calling on a steely discipline and self-belief beyond his years, responded to this boast with bitter laughter. "Oh, yeah?" he said. "Imagine who we could have been with an education!" Yet his anger rested with himself. When I questioned these friends, more recently, on their decision to send their children to private secondary schools, they talked with the same forthrightness they'd always used when arguing at School X in the '70s. It was a no-brainer, they said, to send their kids to the best school they could get them into. Did I really think they'd let their *kids* get screwed on education, too?

I asked them if they felt frustrated, as I did, about the persisting discrepancies and injustice of our two-tier education system. Of course, they told me, but this was how it was in this country, and there was no point in trying to pretend otherwise; they weren't about to risk their kids' futures for the sake of political and cultural principle. They felt deeply for people who didn't have the ability to go private, who were stranded in areas with very poor public schools. But what could they do about that?

It seemed they'd long ago absorbed the idea that a reliably good and rounded education must be paid for privately; no Australian government could be trusted to provide one. Even federal Labor governments proved perversely resistant to making this goal their highest priority; it was extraordinary that the current Labor government vowed to maintain government funding of private schools, when public schools, in stark contrast, were in such obvious and dire need.

I sent my youngest child to our zoned public high school in Melbourne, which is one of the highest-achieving in the state, but I faltered at the 12-month mark and sent him to a small private school. The former's problems (funding shortfalls, challenging student population, stressed and demoralised staff, costly vandalism) had started to impinge, to my mind, on its mandate to teach effectively.

I was again painfully aware of the tremendous differences between the two systems. Trucking back and forth between an inner-city public high school and an outer-subsurban private school provoked the same

feelings of guilt and intellectual distress in me as I'd experienced in the '70s.

There is, I have discovered, a very particular type of *cognitive dissonance* to be managed, when sending your children to join the middle-class drift from public to private education. It is a morally repugnant position to be in, as is belonging to, participating in, and perpetuating a culture that will not commit fully and unconditionally to funding – to *insisting* on – equitable and excellent public education. The question for all remains: how to effect real change?

At the last parent-teacher interview I attended at our public high school, I sat down to discuss the year's progress with my child's teacher. This teacher wasn't young, nor did she seem inexperienced, but she was certainly morose and fighting a deep fatigue. After my allotted 15 minutes, in which I struggled to tally what she told me with my son's character, I stood up, shook her hand, and went to leave the room. Suddenly she called out to me and confessed she'd just made an error. "I am *so* sorry," she said, in genuine apology, but also with a defensive cock of an eyebrow, as in: 'I've been in this shitty little gig way too long.' "I have just given you the report of somebody else's child, told you about the wrong boy! Please," she cajoled, pleasantly. "Come back, sit down, and let's start over, shall we?"

Let's start over. The essence of that plea has hung around in my head, insistent, for years. In another context, it's the very same appeal David Gonski has just issued the country, in his recommendations for a more equitable distribution of school funding. Really, what fair-minded person could fail to heed it?

<https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2012/april/1339484071/catherine-ford/across-great-divide>

More on education...

In his 1993 book, *Reshaping Australian Education 1960-1985*, F W Connell heads a chapter: 'Growing Politicisation of Administration'. A subheading reads: '**The Victorian Administrative Experience: a sacked, plundered and smoking Australian educational battlefield**'.

On 19 April 1998 W F Connell wrote Fredrick Töben a letter:

Dear Dr Töben

I have been interested to read your manuscript on part of the 'Australian educational battlefield'. You write well and your account of your experiences is vividly expressed.

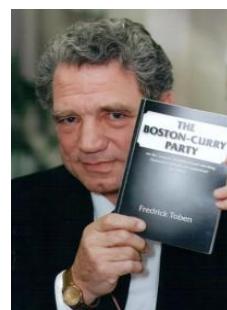
I am afraid, however, that I cannot empathise enough with our views and activities to write an appropriate 'couple of paragraphs' for the cover of your book.

With best wishes for your venture,

Sincerely yours,

W F Connell

Read: **The Boston-Curry Party**, and find out what it was like teaching in Victorian Education Department schools during the 1980s.



<http://www.toben.biz/docs-2/>

An enquiring mind exchanges views with an Holocaust Missionary working at a local paper in the USA

On Thu, Apr 30, 2015 at 12:37 PM, Steve Campbell openbook47@gmail.com wrote:

Dear Editor,

In the Wednesday, April 29 issue of the *Glenwood Springs Post/Independent* there was an article "Dachau Day is what today is." For a differing view google: Realist Report: The Holocaust Debunked Once and For All, for a one hour 17 minute video.

<http://www.therealistreport.com/2015/04/the-holocaust-debunked-once-and-for-all.html>

If you have any doubts after seeing that, visit holocaustrevisionism.com

Steve Campbell
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
[970-945-1030](tel:970-945-1030)

Sent from Gmail Mobile

From: Steve Campbell openbook47@gmail.com
Date: Friday, May 1, 2015 12:26 PM
To: letters letters@postindependent.com,
letters@soprisun.com,
Don Rogers drogers@vaildaily.com,
Aspen General Mail AspenGeneralMail@swifcom.com,
letters@aspendedailynews.com, letters@qjsentinel.com
Subject: Re: letter to the editor

Forgot my street address.

515 8th. St. #5
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
[970-945-1030](tel:970-945-1030)

On Friday, May 1, 2015, Randy Essex REssex@postindependent.com wrote:

Not going to run this. It's offensive.
Randy Essex, Editor
Glenwood Springs Post Independent
[970-384-9110](tel:970-384-9110)

Follow us on Twitter: @GlenwoodPI
Follow me on Twitter: @randyeessex

Sent from my mobile phone

Steve Campbell openbook47@gmail.com wrote:
Since when is legitimate research offensive?

On Saturday, May 2, 2015, Randy Essex REssex@postindependent.com wrote:

The Holocaust is historical fact.

Have you ever met and talked with a concentration camp survivor, seen their tattoos, listened to them describe being orphaned? I have.

In your view, they are liars, the liberating soldiers, including the Vail doctor featured in the story we ran, are all liars.

To deny the Holocaust is offensive to history and humanity.
There's a video out there suggesting that the United States staged 9/11. Doesn't make it true.

There are people who think the moon landing was staged on a Hollywood set. Doesn't make it true.

The PI, with me as editor, won't be printing letters saying the Holocaust didn't happen.

Randy Essex
Editor
Glenwood Springs Post Independent

[970-901-2369](tel:970-901-2369)

On Sun, May 3, 2015 at 11:53 AM, Steve Campbell openbook47@gmail.com wrote:

Watch the video and test your assumptions. To my mind, you are a holocaust zealot true believer. This is America where FREEDOM TO DIFFERING OPINIONS is relished, not denigrated.

From: Steve Campbell <openbook47@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jul 16, 2015 at 1:49 PM

Subject: Fwd: letter to the editor

To: mbennett@postindependent.com

Mr. Bennett,

In your recent editorial you asked for feedback on how the newspaper is doing. The exchange below with Randy Essex, read from the bottom up, is self-explanatory.

This third-rail issue needs exposure. Is this country going the way of Germany and about 16 other countries, most of whom are in Europe, where negating any parcel of the official Holocaust narrative is against the law?

None of the newspapers I submitted this to printed it. What does that tell you?

Sincerely,

Steve Campbell

From: Steve Campbell <openbook47@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 4, 2015 at 11:22 AM

Subject: Re: letter to the editor

To: Randy Essex <REssex@postindependent.com>

I have met and talked with a concentration camp survivor and seen her tattoos. I never said she or the liberating soldiers or the Vail doctor were liars.

However, I have studied the evidence. Hitler never gave orders for the extermination of the Jews. Six million did not die in the concentration camps. There were no gas chambers for killing humans. By the way, I founded **Citizens for 9/11 Truth in January, 2006 right here in the Roaring Fork Valley.**

And I misspelled zealot. If the holocaust was as described by accepted history were true the evidence would confirm that, but it doesn't. You and millions of others have been brainwashed with propaganda. Let my letter run and let the people learn the facts. Otherwise you are just another gatekeeper for the power elite.

From: Steve Campbell openbook47@gmail.com

Date: Monday, August 31, 2015 2:25 PM

To: letters letters@postindependent.com,

letters@soprisun.com,

Don Rogers drogers@vaildaily.com,

Aspen General Mail letters@aspendedailynews.com,

letters@qjsentinel.com,

CTGeneralMail mail@citizentelegram.com,

Michael Bennett MBennett@postindependent.com,

Randy Essex REssex@postindependent.com

Subject: Fwd: letter to the editor

JFK Secret Societies Speech (full version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdMbmdFOvTs>

On Mon, Aug 31, 2015 at 2:44 PM, Randy Essex REssex@postindependent.com wrote:

So you mean we are doing well by not printing letters from Holocaust deniers?
I agree.
Thanks for the compliment!
Randy Essex, Editor

Glenwood Springs Post Independent

[970-384-9110](tel:970-384-9110)

Follow us on Twitter: @GlenwoodPI

Follow me on Twitter: @randyessex

Neil deGrasse Tyson destroys moon landing truthers: "Are you trying to blow my mind?" He also explains why black people never see UFOs and why aliens are so into butt stuff

[JOANNA ROTHKOPF, FRIDAY, APR 17, 2015 10:44 PM +0930](#)

On Thursday evening's edition of "The Nightly Show," host Larry Wilmore [attempted to "break" astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson's brain](#) by forcing him to disprove a number of conspiracy theories.



Credit: Comedy Central)

The first conspiracy Tyson had to debunk was that the moon landing and the accompanying video were actually staged. If you know anything about me (which you don't because I've never written publicly about this before) you'll know that my boyfriend, who is actually very smart in every other way, is a moon landing truther.

It's an odd little quirk that transforms him from normal New York Jewish boy into New York Jewish boy who you maybe shouldn't leave alone with your children. *Needless to say*, when we watched this together last night, I physically mooned him because I am the winner of that argument and he is so, so dumb.

But back to the show.

"Are you trying to blow my mind?" Tyson asked after comedian Mike Cannon verbatim echoed the views of my

whack boyfriend. "You can look at the Saturn V rocket, which got us to the moon and back, and calculate how much fuel is in there, and watch the thing take off, and ask yourself: where the hell do you think this thing is going? There's enough fuel to get you to the moon, and stuff left over to come back. It's not just going down to the grocery store — it is a Saturn V rocket."

He also explained why the flag seems to blow in the air in the moon landing footage — a detail often invoked by truthers:

"Since there is no air on the moon, anything set into motion — because they set up the flag and he's holding it and lets go, the flag flips back and forth and it doesn't slow down because there's no air to slow it down." They also discussed why aliens are so into butt stuff, why black people never see UFOs, and whether or not Stevie Wonder is actually blind — and Tyson had a great answer to each of these, except for the last one.

[Because I am maybe a Stevie Wonder truther, and I can't be won over.](#)

Watch the clip below: only available in the USA.
Joanna Rothkopf is an assistant editor at Salon, focusing on science, health and society.
Follow @JoannaRothkopf or email jrothkopf@salon.com.
http://www.salon.com/2015/04/17/neil_degrasse_tyson_destroys_moon_landing_truthers_are_you_trying_to_blow_my_mind/

MEINUNG

Otto Schilys Justiz-Irrtum

Wer im Land der Täter die Schoa leugnet, raubt damit Millionen Opfern postum ihre Würde

02.04.2015 – von [Nathan Gelbart](#)

Die Gedanken sind frei», heißt es in einem Volkslied aus dem 18. Jahrhundert – jeder hat das Recht, seine Meinung zu äußern und hierbei sogar den allergrößten Unsinn zu artikulieren, auch wenn es um die Schoa geht. Ex-Bundesinnenminister Otto Schily hat kürzlich in einem Interview mit dem »Zeit«-Magazin die Strafbarkeit der Holocaustleugnung infrage gestellt. Schily unterschlägt hierbei, dass unsere Rechtsordnung akribisch zwischen Meinungsäußerungen und Tatsachenbehauptungen unterscheidet.

Wer Unwahrheiten über Dritte verbreitet, muss sich sowohl zivilrechtlich als auch strafrechtlich für die entstandene Persönlichkeitsrechtsverletzung verantworten.

WÜRDE Millionen Holocaustopfer, darunter sechs Millionen Juden, können sich nicht mehr wehren. Wer heute im Land der Täter die Schoa leugnet, raubt damit Millionen Opfern postum ihre Geschichte, ihre Ehre und nicht zuletzt ihre Würde. Auch aus diesem Grund hat der Gesetzgeber eine Strafverschrift eingeführt.

Diese Vorschrift verleiht dem Staat die Möglichkeit, die Persönlichkeitsrechte der Schoa-Opfer als Kollektiv und das Rechtsgut des »öffentlichen Friedens« wahrzunehmen, es zu schützen und den Verletzer strafrechtlich zu verfolgen. Gerade jetzt zeigt sich, wie wichtig genau diese Strafverschrift ist.

Denn prominente Vertreter aus Kirche und Justiz wie Bischof Richard Williamson und Horst Mahler leugnen offen den Holocaust. Sehr bald werden Überlebende nicht mehr Zeugnis von ihrem Leid ablegen können, immer mehr Mahlers und Williamsons werden Hochkonjunktur haben.

ANTISEMITEN Otto Schilys Aufruf, den Strafcharakter der Holocaustleugnung zu überdenken, hat aber noch eine weitere Konsequenz: Als »Israelkritiker« getarnte Judenhasser leugnen und relativieren den Holocaust vor allem deshalb, um dem Staat Israel seine Legitimität als Heimstätte des jüdischen Volkes absprechen zu können.

Die Rechtsordnung eines Staates, der nicht aufhört, die besondere historische Verantwortung gegenüber dem jüdischen Volk und dem Staat Israel für sich in Anspruch zu nehmen, kann

und darf auf die Strafvorschrift der Holocaustleugnung nicht verzichten.

Der Autor ist Rechtsanwalt in Berlin und Vorsitzender des Keren Hayesod Deutschland.

<http://www.juedischeallgemeine.de/article/view/id/21940>

Auschwitz museum visitors claim cooling showers resemble those in Nazi concentration camp

Wednesday, 2 September 2014, 8:17am



The Auschwitz memorial museum has defended itself against complaints of insensitivity after setting up mist sprinklers intended to cool visitors as they queued for tickets. Some visitors complained the sprinklers outside the building in Poland resembled showers. The Nazis murdered a million Jews at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in gas chambers disguised as shower rooms.

Photographs published in the media showed young people cooling off underneath the suspended hosepipe. The museum said it installed the sprinklers outside the entrance because of last month's heatwave in Poland. Temperatures exceeded 30 degrees Celsius, and some people fainted after queuing for tickets for long periods of time in the blazing sun. The wellbeing of visitors was the museum's priority, a statement posted on the Auschwitz Memorial Facebook page said.

"Something had to be done, as we have noticed cases of faints among people and other dangerous situations," the statement said. They said the hosepipe did not resemble the gas chamber showers. "The mist sprinklers do not look like showers and the fake showers installed by Germans inside some of the gas chambers were not used to deliver gas into them," the statement said.

"Zyklon B was dropped inside the gas chambers in a completely different way — through holes in the ceiling or airtight drops in walls."



Photo: Nazis murdered a million Jews at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in gas chambers disguised as showers. (peuplier: www.flickr.com)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-02/auschwitz-defends-installing-showers-for-visitors/6742352>

Natalie Portman Challenges the Holocaust Uniqueness Doctrine

By [Jonas E. Alexis](#) on September 1, 2015

Deborah Lipstadt—whose greatest intellectual achievement is to call virtually anyone who disagrees with her a "Holocaust denier" or an "anti-Semite"—is an ideologue precisely because she does not allow truth and reason to guide her thinking.

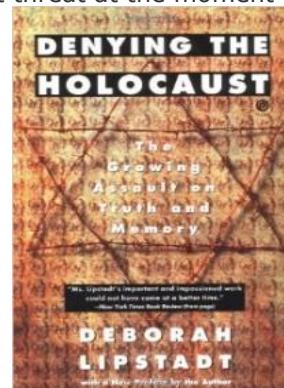


"Frankly, my dear, I have no serious arguments. I only have ideology. And if you even dare to disagree with me here, then you are ipso facto an anti-Semite. I am Professor Deborah Lipstadt, and I welcome you to my world."

[Editor's Note: Deborah Lipstadt is a holocaust terrorist and it is time to get that phrase into the lexicon as she plays a roll similar to the Jihadi head choppers, to sew fear in the ranks of all non-believers.

I had to jump in here, rare for me to do because Jonas' work does not need any help, because "Deborah the Lip" lives here in Atlanta and her holocaust kitsch is well known, but the news does not travel far. She was quoted at an all Jewish function once describing intermarriage as "holocausting the race". There is no level to which this woman will not sink.

She was given an assignment to write [Denying the Holocaust](#), but had the first version sent back for a rewrite. In the later lawsuit by David Irving against her for libel one of the discovery gems that he got is the letter requesting the rewrite. Her Lobby handlers wanted her to focus more on Irving as due to his reputation he was "our biggest threat at the moment".



The book was a classic psychological operation

Her handlers fed her hoaxed research, like Irving having a huge painting of Hitler in his office behind his desk, and that his father served Franco in the Spanish Civil War, and much more. None of this was true but Lipstadt had no problem with putting it in.

Irving lost the case and the legal costs for both sides bankrupted him. A single judge heard the case and Irving later admitted that representing himself was a mistake.



David Irving in his prime

Lipstadt never testified. But he sacrificed all of his hard earned treasure to have the daily trial transcripts published over night during the trial, and where the above gem came from, including that she was paid \$25,000 to write the book, in which I assume low paid interns helped.

One last gem I will share is another discovery document about a TV show that Irving was going to be on in Washington where the Jewish Lobby did their usual attempt to muscle the station into cancelling the show, which to their credit they did not. The Lobby people's plan B was to insist they have one of their people in the show "out of fairness", something they never accept when the situation is reversed.

Irving got his show guest's report to his superiors where he stated that, "Irving is definitely not an anti-semitic, but we will have to call him one anyway". So that folks is why I don't think it is an exaggeration to call these people holocaust terrorists, because unlike their smearing of Irving, they really are.

Please enjoy Jonas' excellent piece below. He is one of our best writers, definitely the hardest working, and we are lucky to have him. As for Irving, I have three video shoots of trips he made to Atlanta which are among my archive treasures... [Jim W. Dean](#)]

Noted German historian and philosopher Ernst Nolte once made the mistake of comparing the "Holocaust" to other crimes that have committed in history, such as Stalin's extermination of the Russian people, the Armenian genocide,[\[1\]](#) and Pol Pot's crimes against humanity. For this, Jewish thought police Deborah Lipstadt of Emory University accused him of Holocaust denial, one of the most unpardonable sins of our age. Historian Joachim Fest defended Nolte on historical and rational grounds, and received the same treatment.[\[2\]](#)

Nolte believes that "Auschwitz was contained in the principles of Nazi racist theory like the seed in the fruit."[\[3\]](#) He also believes that Hitler's actions were monstrous. But that is not enough for Lipstadt. For her, Nolte has to do something better because the Holocaust, as the late Christopher Hitchens rightly put it back in 2001, is "a secular religion, with state support in the form of a national museum."[\[4\]](#) This secular religion, Jewish historian Tim Cole tells us, is "big business."[\[5\]](#) Lipstadt is certainly enjoying this "big business." For her, "Holocaust denial is a form of anti-Semitism."[\[6\]](#) So, despite the fact that Nolte abides by the principles that make up the Holocaust narrative, he is an anti-Semite because he does not agree with Lipstadt. In 2011, Lipstadt told the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* that if Americans and Israeli politicians use the holocaust for political gains, then it is also similar to "soft-core denial."[\[7\]](#)

It is pretty obvious that Lipstadt—whose greatest intellectual achievement is to call virtually anyone who

disagrees with her a "Holocaust denier" or an "anti-Semite"—is an ideologue precisely because she does not allow truth and reason to guide her thinking. In fact, she came to teach at Emory not because of her serious scholarship, but because of the Jewish influence in academe.[\[8\]](#) As E. Michael Jones put it in 2009:

"Holocaust denial is another word for Jewish control of discourse, in particular historical discourse, in particular historical discourse about World War II. If an historian publishes something that a powerful Jew, which is to say a Jew with powerful backers, dislikes, that person will be punished.

"If the person in question lives by writing books, as David Irving once did, the Lipstadt brigade will get him blacklisted in the publishing industry. If the person in question is a professor, the big Jews will try to get him fired, as Deborah Lipstadt herself did in the case of Professor David O'Connell."[\[9\]](#)

One can say that Lipstadt's ideological *weltanschauung* became quite apparent when she started to assign the book ***Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood 1939-1948*** to her students.

The Holocaust memoir of Benjamin Wilkomirski, *Fragments* came out in 1995 and enjoyed immediate success. Journalist Melissa Katsoulis writes that sales "across Europe and the English-speaking world were impressive. It won the prestigious Prix Memoire de la Shoah in France, the Jewish Quarterly's prize in London and also its American equivalent, the National Jewish Books Award.

"Feted by critics, historians and book-buyers alike, Wilkomirski found himself fending off interview requests from television, newspaper and magazine editors, and for the next three years rose to become one of the most sought-after and well-loved survivors of Hitler's atrocities."[\[10\]](#)

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen also supported the book,[\[11\]](#) as well as major newspapers such as *Publishers Weekly*. To everyone's chagrin, *Fragments* was a complete hoax, a fabrication by a non-Jew. As Finkelstein puts it, "Half-fruitcake, half-mountebank, Wilkomirski, it turns out, spent the entire war in Switzerland. He is not even a Jew."[\[12\]](#)

That was bad enough. Yet Deborah Lipstadt stated the book was still "powerful as a novel"! But what about the people who plunked down the money to buy the book, thinking that it was actual history? Doesn't Lipstadt owe them an apology?

Well, for the Holocaust establishment, a wicked ideology is more important than truth and reason. And once truth and reason are excluded from intellectual and political categories, then one is lost in the sea of irrational ideas, irresponsible assertions, mumbo jumbo, ideological interest, and complete hoaxes and colossal fabrications. After providing a frontal and rational attack on utilitarianism and its proponents, Emmanuel Kant wrote, "**For what they discovered was never duty [objective moral principles which are universally binding], but only the necessity of acting from a certain interest [ideology].**"[\[13\]](#)

That certainly represents the academic life of Deborah Lipstadt. She frivolously argues that if a person says that Zionism is racism, then that person is *ipso facto* an anti-Semite. There is more. If the UN condemns Israel for mercilessly slaughtering the Palestinians, then that again

is, in her own term, "legalized Anti-Semitism."[\[14\]](#) For her, Israel is always right. End of discussion.

In that sense, Norman Finkelstein is an anti-Semite (or self-hating Jew)! Lipstadt had this to say of Finkelstein: "**Think of the dirt you step in on the street and you know what kind of dirt I'm talking about. It has no importance unless you fail to clean it off your shoe before you go into the house.**"[\[15\]](#)

What we are seeing here is that Lipstadt is conforming the truth to her ideological desires and appetites. In other words, Lipstadt chose to suppress the real truth and substitute instead her own desires, which she spreads throughout her books and speeches and online writing. To understand the implications here, we must ask the deeper questions.

Is *Fragments* truth? Yes and no. In the Western rationalist tradition? No. In the essentially Talmudic tradition? It is, because it favors the ideological foundations of people like Lipstadt. This is why Lipstadt could only come up with the idea that the book is "a powerful novel." In other words, she would prefer to promote a swift lie than to tell the truth about the book itself.

We are facing another intolerable situation here. Jewish ideologues such as Stanley Fish and Jacques Derrida tell us that there is no such thing as absolute truth. They teach us all that we only have a text and interpretation to the text. But here Lipstadt is positing "absolute truth" about the "Holocaust"!

Throughout *Denying the Holocaust*, Lipstadt says that "attacks on the Western rationalist tradition have become common place."[\[16\]](#) This is certainly too good to be true. How, then, is Lipstadt seeking to destroy the career of anyone who questions or challenges the central tenets of the Holocaust narrative? Why is she calling virtually anything that she does not like "anti-Semitism"? Why was she saying that there ought to be a "law against Holocaust denial"?[\[17\]](#) Is that how the Western rationalist tradition works? You see, Lipstadt is carrying her own casket here. As E. Michael Jones rightly put it, "**In her professional activity Professor Lipstadt resembles less the scholar and more the political commissars assigned to units of the Soviet Army or the interrogators at the Cheka, the Soviet secret police, positions that were more often than not staffed by Jews, as Jewish historians have noted.**

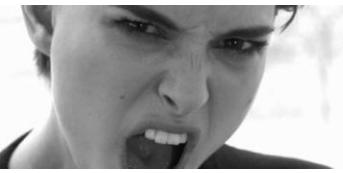
"Professor Lipstadt is the spiritual descendant of these Jewish investigators. Professor Lipstadt's job is to shoot anybody in academe or publishing (the current equivalent of the Soviet army) who is not following the party line."[\[18\]](#)

Lipstadt also mentions Stanley Fish as one of the exponents of the idea that absolute truth does not exist. But Lipstadt, as E. Michael Jones would have framed it, cannot understand that Fish's understanding of the text is drawn from his rejection of metaphysical Logos, the essence of all that exists.

What we are seeing here is that Lipstadt realizes that Fish's essentially Talmudic interpretation of the text is becoming annoying and too demanding and certainly cannot stand intellectual scrutiny. If absolute truth does not exist, Lipstadt seems to realize, then the Holocaust narrative is a sham.

Deborah Lipstadt's ideology has certainly come to an abrupt end recently when Hollywood celebrity and Jewish actress Natalie Portman said:

"I think a really big question the Jewish community needs to ask itself, is how much at the forefront we put Holocaust education. Which is, of course, an important question to remember and to respect, but not over other things."[\[19\]](#)



"What? You mean to tell me that the Holocaust is unique? Come on!"

The *Jerusalem Post* said that Portman "recalled learning about the Rwandan Genocide during a visit to a museum and being shocked that while the Holocaust figured prominently into her education, a contemporary genocide did not. According to the United Nations, 800,000 people, 'perhaps as many as three-quarters of the Tutsi [tribal] population' were killed during the course of the early '90s genocide."[\[20\]](#)

Portman continued:

"I was shocked that that [genocide] was going on while I was in school. We were learning only about the Holocaust and it was never mentioned and it was happening while I was in school. That is exactly the type of problem with the way it's taught. I think it needs to be taught, and I can't speak for everyone because this was my personal education.

"We need to be reminded that hatred exists at all times and reminds us to be empathetic to other people that have experienced hatred also. Not used as a paranoid way of thinking that we are victims. Sometimes it can be subverted to fear-mongering and like 'Another Holocaust is going to happen.'[\[21\]](#)

The Holocaust establishment, of course, went berserk. Colette Avital, the chairwoman of the Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors in Israel, responded:

"Natalie should understand that the Holocaust which befell us cannot be compared to other tragedies – our empathy notwithstanding. It was not merely hatred, it was a policy whose aim was to systematically wipe out a whole people from the face of the world."[\[22\]](#)

Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Jerusalem office declared,

"If [Portman] wants to express her sympathy with all victims of such tragedies, this is definitely not a smart way to do so."[\[23\]](#)

Interesting, isn't it? The Israeli regime and their puppets in the West spent years saying that Saddam Hussein was the "new Hitler."[\[24\]](#) Then it was Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, former president of Iran, who was the "new Hitler."[\[25\]](#) Vladimir Putin is currently the "new Hitler" on the block.[\[26\]](#) And now Avital is telling us that the so-called Holocaust "cannot be compared to other tragedies"? What in the world is that?

Jonah Goldberg wrote back in 2003 that "comparing Saddam to Hitler is justified."[\[27\]](#)

But comparing the "Holocaust" to other genocides is not justified, even though we have massive historical accounts indicating that what happened in Nazi Germany was just a footnote in the history of mankind.[\[28\]](#) Something really fishy is going on here. As E. Michael Jones pointed out again,

"We live in a culture which erects monuments to Jewish culture. We also live in a culture which prohibits unauthorized interpretations of Jewish monuments. The

Holocaust is the prime Jewish cultural monument of our day.

"So we have a federally funded Holocaust museum in Washington, but at the same time it is illegal in many countries of the world to question any of the self-contradictory assertions about the Holocaust....

"Questioning the number of people who died in concentration camps, whether they died in gas chambers or by other means, or whether there was a plan to exterminate Jews, can land you in jail in 13 countries in the world, even though the numbers have already changed a number of times and the term holocaust came from a by now abandoned assertion that the Jews were exterminated in pits of flaming kerosene."[\[29\]](#)



"Puppets of the Holocaust establishment are asking me to be an idiot. They want me to drop the Socratic method which I learned from the intellectual tradition and then to embrace a new rule which is essentially Talmudic. In other words, Goyim like me cannot ask serious questions about World War II. This is too demanding for me. For this very reason, they have accused me of Holocaust denial. If that is the way they want to go, so be it."

The Holocaust establishment is certainly not being fair at all. They are giving lip service to academic inquiry and intellectual honesty and pursuit while at the same time they are doing their best to persecute and prosecute people who simply ask deep questions about the past. Dr Fredrick Töben, our good friend and a true fighter, is a classic example. He has been mercilessly and unfairly called a "Holocaust denier" by the powers that be.[\[30\]](#) Why?

Well, he questioned the metaphysical nature of the Holocaust narrative. But since proponents of the Holocaust narrative do not present serious arguments, they have chosen to attack him personally by calling him a neo-Nazi or anti-Semitic.[\[31\]](#)

Legal scholar Uta Kohl of Aberystwyth University, Wales, writes without qualifications or serious thought that Töben had published "anti-Semitic material," leaving the impression that the man is indeed an anti-Semite.[\[32\]](#)

Töben was trained in philosophy. In other words, asking deep questions is part of his intellectual patrimony.

So, the Holocaust establishment was asking him to drop his critical thinking skills, lower his intellectual standard, and embrace an ideology which is essentially anti-reason. Töben, after much reflection, refused. This was an unpardonable sin, and Töben ended up spending months in jail. Here is what he told me:

"I am a Holocaust questioner because that is what my philosophical training was all about - to question the veracity of what Holocaust historians have constructed in their narrative.

"Throughout these past seventy years this narrative has constantly changed while being fixed in legal concrete, and I object to such mechanism that has often protected outright lies at the expense of truth emerging, which

directly impacts on our free expression - the hallmark of our civilization."

Is this view outside the Western intellectual tradition? Absolutely not. To this very day, the state of Israel does not even recognize the Armenian genocide. As we shall see in the future, Jewish professors such as Bernard Lewis spent years at Princeton postulating that the event was not genocide. Did he ever spend a day in jail for embracing such a belief? No. Did the Holocaust establishment petition that he be fired from the university? No.

Töben continued to tell me:

"So, I question any aspect, any assertion made in those many Holocaust-Shoah narratives for truth-content, otherwise I would be offending against my philosophical training and would support the construction of an ideology."

This view, which is rational and defensible, has cost Töben dearly. He said:

"I was forced into bankruptcy of \$230,000+ because legal aid would not cover such proceedings [the cases against him]."

Töben was accused of being a racist, but he defused those charges by saying, "I am firmly anti-racist and I do not come at this in any way designed to undermine the Jewish community."[\[33\]](#)

But that answer still did not satisfy puppets of the Holocaust establishment, who mercilessly persecuted the good man. A few months ago, Töben sent me a message documenting how so-called sex education has invaded German elementary schools. In 2013, the [Daily Mail](#) itself gloriously reported that "Bestiality brothels are 'spreading through Germany...'" That, of course, is freedom. But questioning or challenging the Holocaust ideology is a step too far?

Again, this manipulation is certainly getting on people's nerves.

When Töben heard that I was challenging the Holocaust narrative, he warned me:

"Be wise, and if you can withstand the stress of being a dissenter without hurting your love ones, then the historical examples...should guide you through this legal minefield...There will be attempt to destroy your moral stance but remain firm because truth is your defense."

This is almost the same thing that he told the [Telegraph](#) back in 2008:

"If you wish to begin to doubt the Holocaust-Shoah narrative, you must be prepared for personal sacrifice, must be prepared for marriage and family break-up, loss of career, and go to prison."[\[34\]](#)

I certainly appreciate men who submit to the truth and reason. I salute brave men who refuse to follow a wicked ideology. Töben certainly reminds me of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whom we have quoted extensively in the past:

"And thus, overcoming our temerity, let each man choose: will he remain a witling servant of the lies, or has the time come for him to stand straight as an honest man, worthy of the respect of his children and contemporaries?"[\[35\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) We will delve into the Armenian genocide in the future.

[\[2\]](#) Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Assault on Truth* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 211.

[\[3\]](#) Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 104.

[\[4\]](#) Christopher Hitchens, "The Strange Case of David Irving," *LA Times*, May 20, 2001.

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In the interest of maintaining a civil forum, Alexis asks that all queries be appropriately respectful and maintain a level of civility. As the saying goes, "iron sharpens iron," and the best way to sharpen one's mind is through constructive criticism, good and bad.

However, Alexis has no patience with name-calling and ad hominem attack. He has deliberately ignored many queries and irrational individuals in the past for this specific reason—and he will continue to abide by this policy.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLRhwuF1aJs>